

GARBAGE GAZETTE

PUBLISHED BY

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT UNIT
STATE OFFICE BUILDING, HARTFORD, CT

Vol. 4, No. 5

July-August, 1985

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTES - PART TWO

Solutions:

The June 1985 issue of the Garbage Gazette, "Household Hazardous Wastes - Part One" introduced the problems associated with the improper disposal of commonly-used household hazardous waste products such as cleansers, paint products, metal cleaners and polishes, auto and garden products. Contaminated drinking water is the most dangerous threat associated with the improper disposal of even small amounts of hazardous materials. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) offers several approaches to the problem, several of which are simple options that can be practiced by responsible consumers.

1. Substitute a non-hazardous product. Part One listed some of the safer alternatives to products used by all of us which contain potentially dangerous chemicals. For a more complete list of substitutions, write to either one of the addresses listed at the end of the article.
2. Buy only as much as you need; use up what you have. DEP emphasizes that if a hazardous product must be used, try to limit the purchase as much as possible to the exact amount you anticipate will be needed. Also, try to choose the least hazardous product for the job by comparing labels.
3. Exchange unused materials. If you find that you have no further use for a product and still have plenty left over, try to pass that material along to somebody else who can use it, perhaps in exchange for another material (providing that the material is still useable and is not a banned or restricted use product). DEP is encouraging municipalities to foster the idea of exchanging materials in their communities as a safe and cost-effective way for a municipality to avoid both expensive disposal costs of household hazardous products, as well as to limit the potential of improper disposal. Bulletin boards, hot-lines, notices in newspapers and information centers are all ways exchange systems could be operated.

Collection Days

While those are steps that we as consumers can take, methods for the safe disposal of hazardous materials still must be provided if we are to avoid the dangers of improper disposal. DEP recommends to municipalities that they sponsor annual community collection days where householders can bring their unused materials and they can be safely collected and disposed of by a licensed hazardous waste firm. A community collection day also provides an opportunity for public education on the hazards of household products which will result in an overall increase in public awareness.

The towns of Ridgefield, Westport/Weston, Greenwich and Mansfield have all sponsored collection days thusfar, and collection days in the towns of Wethersfield/Rocky Hill, eight towns in the northeast section of the state that will join together in a regional effort, Manchester, Southington, Ridgefield/Wilton, Farmington and Salisbury/Sharon will take place on September 14, October 26, October 19 (Manchester, Southington, Ridgefield/Wilton), October 26 and November 2, respectively. (All dates are subject to change.) Many other towns are currently in various planning stages. DEP stands ready to assist communities in organizing collection days which takes a great deal of careful planning, and may reimburse up to 50% of the collection costs of the day (providing DEP approval has been given) until the current allocated state funds of \$250,000 is exhausted. (New appropriations for collection days will be made at the discretion of the legislature.)

Organizing a collection day for the disposal of hazardous waste requires much careful planning which should begin at least six months to a year prior to the actual day. DEP's How to Organize a Community Collection Day gives a valuable step-by-step procedural outline

on how to organize a successful day. Briefly, the steps involved include:

1. Gathering information on household hazardous wastes.
2. Contacting and involving all potentially interested groups.
3. Coordinating an initial meeting.
4. Contacting DEP for approval.
5. Involving the media.
6. Holding regular follow-up meetings.

Crucial to the planning and success of the day is: carefully selecting a date and location; doing extensive public education and publicity; gathering the necessary financial support; locating and contracting with a licensed hazardous waste management firm; and carefully investigating safety, legal and liability issues.

Costs for collection days here in Connecticut have ranged from \$5,000 in the Town of Ridgefield to \$18,000 for the towns of Westport/Weston where 81 drums of hazardous materials were collected. One way for a municipality to help defray the costs of the day is to charge residents for materials brought in. The towns of Ridgefield and Greenwich charged a small fee for materials brought in that were in excess of 5-10 lbs. or gallons.

For a copy of How to Organize A Community Collection Day, and for general assistance and guidance in setting up a day, contact either:

Glenn A. Goldsmith
Hazardous Materials Management Section
DEP
State Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
(203) 566-8843

OR

Leslie Lewis
Information and Education
DEP
State Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106
(203) 566-3489

Guidelines for grant applications as well as additional guidelines for operating a collection day will be mailed out by DEP to elected and other public officials in late summer.

Upcoming Conferences:

The National Recycling Congress is sponsoring a conference in Columbus, Ohio on Sept. 4-6. Varied topics such as the future of solid waste management, a national recycling policy, and export markets for recyclables will be addressed. Workshops will cover community participation in recycling, business planning, information on resource recovery plants, and grading paper and metals for markets. For more information, write the Ohio Office of Litter Control, Fountain Square, Columbus, OH 43224 or phone (614) 265-6333.

The second annual conference of the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials will convene at the Parkview Hilton Hotel in Hartford, CT on Sept. 16-17. John Skinner, Director of the USEPA Office of Solid Waste, will be on hand to offer the federal perspective regarding a revitalization of federal support for state and local efforts. Panel workshops will be offered on the following subjects: Groundwater Monitoring; Siting Approaches to Solid Waste Management; Retrofitting Resource Recovery Facilities/ Expanding Landfills; Does State Siting Policy Affect Local Governments?; How are States Dealing with the Capacity Crisis?; Waste-to-Energy Technology; and Source Separation, among others. For more information, contact Charles Kurker, Solid Waste Management, DEP, State Office Building, Hartford, CT 06106. (203) 566-3672.

BioCycle magazine will be sponsoring a conference on September 25, 26, 27 in Philadelphia, PA titled "New Options for Recycling Solid Waste." Workshops will be offered in the following categories: Developing the Right Plan; Solid Waste Composting; Equipment and Markets; Financing and Legal Issues; Leaves and Yard Wastes; Collection; and Gaining Acceptance. Registration fees are \$195 and include field trip transportation, all sessions, materials and reception. For more information write to Celeste Madtes, BioCycle, Box 351, Emmaus, PA 18049. (215) 967-4135.

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Solid Waste Management Unit
Department of Environmental Protection
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Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit No. 4313
Hartford, CT

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44240